

## Central testing ground of the Russian Federation on Novaya Zemlya. Dossier

Handed over on the 60th anniversary of its founding on September 17



The Central Nuclear Test Site of the Russian Federation on the Novaya Zemlya archipelago (part of the Arkhangelsk Region) between the Barents and Kara Seas was created in 1954 to conduct tests of megaton-class nuclear weapons.

The test site occupies an area of 90.2 thousand square kilometers, of which 55 thousand square kilometers are land. It includes three main sites: the Black Bay, the southern shore of the Matochkin Shar Strait, and the D-II Northern Test Site "Novaya Zemlya" (NTSNZ) on the Sukhoi Nos Peninsula.

On July 31, 1954, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU) and the Council of Ministers of the USSR issued classified decree No. 1559-699 on the establishment of the "Object-700" test site with its center in the village of Belushya Guba in the Arkhangelsk Region. Novaya Zemlya had all the conditions necessary for a nuclear weapons testing site - mountainous islands with high banks, convenient for conducting underground nuclear tests, many fjords, bays and coves, and a small population of about 400 people.

September 17, 1954 is considered the day of the founding of the test site. On this day, a directive was signed at the General Staff of the USSR Navy with the staff structure of the new military unit, which included experimental-scientific and engineering components, power and water supply services, a fighter aviation regiment, a transport aviation detachment, a division of special-purpose ships and vessels, an emergency rescue service division, a communications center, rear support units, etc.

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On September 21, 1955, at the Black Bay site, at a depth of 12 m, the first underwater nuclear explosion in the USSR was carried out using an RDS-G charge of a (ns).

On September 7, 1957, a ground test of a nuclear charge with a yield of 32 kt took place. On October 10, a test of the T-5 torpedo launched from the S-144 submarine took place.

On March 5, 1958, by a resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR, "Object 700" was transformed into the State Central Test Site No. 6 (6GTSP) of the USSR Ministry of Defense. Another 20 nuclear explosions in the atmosphere were conducted at the test site. After that, a moratorium on testing was declared, which lasted more than two years. In 1961, air and underwater testing resumed on Novaya Zemlya. On October 30, 1961, a 58-megaton thermonuclear aerial bomb AN602 was detonated at the D-II SIPNZ site.

The peak of testing occurred in 1961-1962 - during the exercises "Air", "Rose", "Volga", "Raduga", "Coral", "Tulip", "LTU" and "Shkval" 56 nuclear devices were detonated. New models of charges were tested, the actions of military units of the Navy, Strategic Missile Forces (RVSN) and Ground Forces were checked during actual nuclear explosions. In August 1962, the last sea-surface nuclear explosion was carried out on the territory of the test site, after which mainly atmospheric tests of experimental nuclear charges were carried out with the participation of Long-Range Aviation and RVSN aircraft.

On August 5, 1963, in Moscow, representatives of the USSR, USA and Great Britain signed the Treaty on the Ban of Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, Outer Space and Underwater. Preparations for underground tests began at the testing ground. The first underground nuclear explosion was carried out on September 18, 1964.

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The total power of all nuclear explosions carried out on Novaya Zemlya, in terms of energy release, was 94% of all nuclear explosions carried out on the territory of the USSR. The last nuclear explosion at the test site was carried out on October 24, 1990, after which the USSR declared a unilateral moratorium on nuclear weapons testing. Russia also adheres to it.

In total, from September 21, 1955 to October 24, 1990, 132 nuclear explosions were carried out on Novaya Zemlya: 87 atmospheric (including 84 air explosions), 1 ground explosion (September 7, 1957), 2 above-water explosions (October 27, 1961 and August 22, 1962), 3 underwater explosions (September 21, 1955, September 10, 1957, September 23, 1961) and 42 underground explosions.


On February 27, 1992, the State Central Firing Range of the USSR Ministry of Defense was renamed the Central Firing Range of the Russian Federation (CF RF) in accordance with Decree No. 194 of President Boris Yeltsin. In 1998, it was transferred to the 12th Main Directorate of the Ministry of Defense.

In 2002, the Russian government decided to maintain the Central Nuclear Test Site in working order. Hydrodynamic experiments are currently being conducted here, which do not release nuclear energy. They do not contradict the provisions of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and do not violate the environment. The radiation background at the site does not exceed 10-12  $\mu\text{R/h}$ . This is lower than the radiation background in large industrial centers.

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